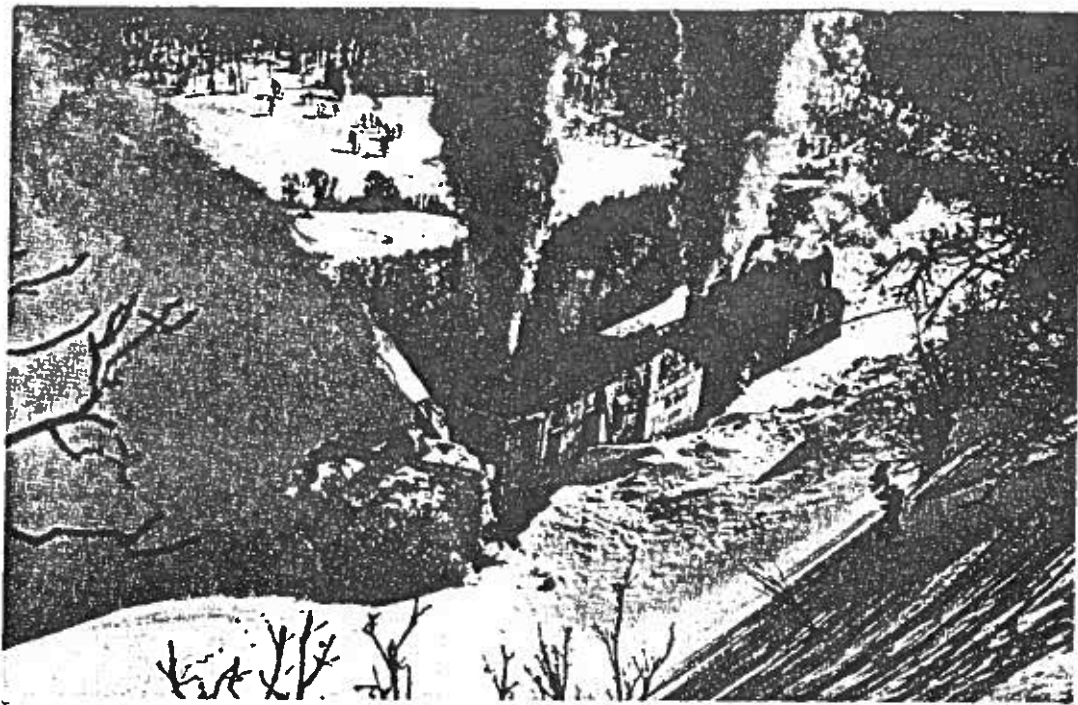


*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

*Please reply to:*

"THE MARLOW DONKEY" No 21

DECEMBER 1981



A HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS  
AND  
NEW YEAR

*Marlow & District  
Railway Society*

Please reply to:

DECEMBER, 1981

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Our Society will shortly be reaching its fifth birthday. As founder members will recall the Society originated from a WEA series of talks on the GWR given in a Marlow School. In subsequent years we have welcomed many speakers, travelled to a number of centres of railway interest, and enjoyed seeing numerous films and slides.

On December 19th we shall be having our fourth Christmas Dinner, once again at the Blue Flag, Cadmore End. As in previous years the January meeting will be the AGM and plans will be discussed for our 1982 gatherings and journeys,

Browsing through my railwayana I was astonished to learn that ten years have elapsed since ex-GWR King George V was allowed back on BR tracks. For three years a non-steam ban had been imposed, the only exception being occasional appearances by Alan Pegler's ex-LNER Flying Scotsman. KGV emerged from Bulmers' Hereford premises with a train of pullman coaches and was seen for several days on her old familiar lines. On October 4th she paused by High Wycombe station to be "watered" by the local fire brigade, before proceeding to London. A day or two later I was waiting patiently by Slough Trading Estate. Suddenly the familiar shape of KGV loomed out of the fog. On this occasion she ran beautifully, unlike a later trip when she had to retire with bearing troubles. In the words of a writer in Railway World VIVAT REGINA!

Fortunately the ban on steam running was soon to be waived by BR and certain preserved locomotives are now vetted and if satisfactory passed by BR inspectors for use on selected lines mainly in the north of England. These specials proved to be so popular with enthusiasts that before long BR began running their own steam services. For a number of very good reasons there are no steam-hauled specials south of Didcot and several pleas to the powers-that-be have been emphatically refused.

Congratulations to the producers of Railway World on their 500th issue. This publication has been in the bookshops since 1939 and has grown in stature from year to year. RW gives a balanced picture of the railways of yesterday and today, Preservation Scene balanced by Rail Report.

"High Speed but seven years late: British Rail's problem child." So said my Sunday paper reporting that the APT will begin an experimental service on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays during December. The APT project has

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cost £37 million and trains should be running in normal timetable services by 1987 (can this be a misprint, I wonder). The problems of tilting and braking have made this an expensive and lengthy venture and one wonders if BR having launched the successful HST's the money could not have been spent more sensibly.

Will there be a second onslaught on our remaining branch lines twenty years after Beeching wielded his axe? In our own area we have been fortunate but I fear there will be a continuing series of cuts of lines considered uneconomic. The occasional, little publicised closures can soon prove to be as disastrous as those of the 1960's.

Movements from the Barry scrapyard total EIGHTEEN for this year. These include two Manors, Odney and Ditchat, three Halls, Kinlet, Olton and Foremarke, and two ex-SR Bulleid pacifics, Tangmere and Wadebridge. 45 of the remaining 78 are either "reserved" or "sold". We little thought in 1968 that thirteen years later so many steam locomotives could have been salvaged and lovingly restored.

#### GET WELL ERIC

Many of you will already be aware that Eric Vallis, one of our most senior members, is ill in Marlow Hospital. Over the years Eric has rarely missed a Society function or meeting and his presence has been missed at the last three meetings. Everyone sends their best wishes to you Eric.

#### CONGRATULATIONS

Those who were present at the November meeting will have heard the news that Roger Bowen our indefatigable secretary has become engaged to be married. The meeting gave the announcement a "rousing" reception.

#### FRONT COVER DISPLAY

The front cover to this edition is the work of Mike Walker and shows a rotary snow plough in action in New Mexico. Why New Mexico? You are invited to ask Mike.

#### THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME AT 19.45 HOURS FOR 20.00 HOURS

- 21 January 1982 - Annual General Meeting followed by members slides.
- 18 February 1982 - Kent and Sussex Railway - talk and slides by D.H. Wilson, Commercial Manager of the railway.
- 18 March 1982 - Trans-Siberian Railway Talk and Film by Richard Kennan of a journey by rail to the Far East.
- 15 April 1982 - Modern Signalling Talk by representative of GEC General Signals Ltd.

### EVENING CLASSES

Your Secretary, Roger Brown, will again be tutoring two ten week courses this spring, this time the subject is "London's Transport". One course will commence on Monday, 18th January, 1982 at the Grange County Secondary School, Wendover Way, Aylesbury and the other on Tuesday, 12th January, 1982 at the Raans County Secondary School, Amersham.

### CHILTERN TRAINS

No excursions are being operated over the winter period but on 19th February, 1982 there will be an evening at Wycombe Town Hall with stands by BR and Sealink with films including "Night Mail" and "Lets go to Birmingham". Details from Chiltern Trains, 1, Druids Walk, Chinnor, Oxon. Tel. Kingston Blount 52198.

### BRUNEL WEEKENDER

British Railways and Keith Coaches get together in a weekend extravaganza exploring the truly magnificent works of I.K. Brunel. These take place on 3/4 April and 2/3 October, 1982. The courier is your Secretary. The fare is £37.50 inclusive of travel, admission fees, and dinner, bed and breakfast at the Avon Gorge Hotel, Bristol.

Those intending to join at London Division Stations should obtain further details from Western Tower Travel Centre, Station Hill, Reading, RG1 1NQ, and those from Aylesbury, Princes Risborough and High Wycombe from 30, Buckingham Street, Aylesbury, HP20 2LH.

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that annual subscriptions are due on 1 January 1982 and it is once again £2.

### FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY, 21 JANUARY, 1982

The Fifth AGM will be held at the Marlow Donkey on Thursday, 21 January 1982.

The members of the Committee who will be standing down in accordance with the rules and will be eligible for re-election are Ted Gregory, Roy Mee, and Mike Norris. Any other paid up member who would like to serve on the Committee should send his nomination in writing to the Secretary, Roger Bowen, not later than 1st January, 1982. Should there be more nominations than vacancies an election will be held at the AGM. The new Committee will meet after the AGM to elect the Society's officers for 1982.

If you have a subject for general discussion please give the Secretary prior notice so that time may be allocated.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the Fourth AGM held on 15th January, 1981.
3. Matters Arising.
4. Chairman's Report.
5. Treasurer's Report.
6. Fawley Railway Report.
7. Norman Aston Smith Trophy.
8. Announcements of Events in 1982 by the Secretary.
9. Items for General Discussion.
10. Election of three Committee Members.

The present Committee is Bas Woodward (Chairman), Roger Bowen (Secretary), Stan Verrinder (Treasurer), Ted Gregory, Roy Mee, Mike Norris and Roger Woodham. Steve Medway was co-opted onto the Committee during the year.

If time permits the AGM will be followed by a showing of members slides. The Secretary will be pleased to receive offers in advance so that he can arrange a programme.

The Norman Aston Smith Trophy is an annual award for the best article in the Marlow Donkey in the previous year so please read this one and the others so that you can cast your vote at the AGM.

If you have no copy of either the minutes of the last AGM or rules of the Society please ask either Roger Bowen or Stan Verrinder for a copy.

#### 25 YEARS AGO - Roger Bowen

In the autumn of 1956 a new batch of steam locomotives were being produced by British Railways. A series of thirty class five 4-6-0's were being constructed by Derby Works with British Caproitti valve gear instead of Walschaerts valve gear, being numbers 73125 - 73154.

More revolutionally was the construction of the coal burning gas turbine locomotive which was reaching completion at the North British Locomotive Co's works in Glasgow. The locomotive was 68 feet long and weighted 150 tons, was single ended with an 1A1A-A1A1 wheel arrangement. It was designed for a maximum speed of 72 m.p.h. and 37,400 lb starting tractive effort.

The idea of modern coal burning motive power was particularly attractive as this was the time of the Suez crisis with fuel rationing for road vehicles. In anticipation of traffic increases the railways had secured the release from National Service of key men in the motive power and operating departments. In fact in December 1956 more coal was moved by rail than any time since nationalisation.

On a sadder note November 1956 saw the last train on the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway, an enthusiasts special hauled by No.822 "The Earl".

The end of December 1956 saw the introduction of through electric trains between Southend-On-Sea (Victoria) and Liverpool Street as the completion of a £2½ million scheme for 1500 volt d.c. electrification. Rolling stock provided was 32 all steel four coach multiple units built at Eastleigh Works.

Developments at the turn of the year saw five standard class 5 4-6-0's being allocated to Neasden, one of which, 73155, worked the "Master Cutler" on 19th January, 1957. On 12th January three excursions for football supporters ran from the Wycombe area to St. Albans via Northolt, Neasden South and Midland Junction. Earlier on 22nd December the 6.45 a.m. Wolverhampton to Paddington was halted at High Wycombe and its "King" removed in favour of 0-6-0T No.9415 which was hurriedly summoned from shunting works at West Ruislip. This was because of a broken rail at Greenford and the train was routed via the Maidenhead branch from which "Kings" were barred.

New locomotives delivered in December 1956 included three diesel-mechanical 0-6-0; 13 diesel electric 0-6-0; four class 5 4-6-0; two 4 4-6-0; two class 2 2-6-0; and five class 9F 2-10-0.

#### SOUTHERN RAILROVER - Roger Bowen

Having sampled last year the Midland Railtourer ticket your Secretary was keen to sample a similar ticket covering part of the former Southern Railway, based on Worthing.

Accordingly a week in September was spent making use of a Southern Region Area Runabout Ticket. This covered the coast from Worthing to Weymouth, including the Littlehampton, Bognor Regis, Portsmouth and Lymington branches. Inland it covered the whole length of the Southern Western Main Line from Basingstoke to Yeovil Junction and the branch as far as Warminster. All lines between these were included in the ticket, i.e. Basingstoke to Southampton, Eastleigh to Fareham, Southampton to Salisbury and surprisingly the ex GWR line from Yeovil Penn Mill to Weymouth.

This has interesting comparisons in railway operation. In the east a dense service of electric trains in the classic manner of the Old Southern Railway, in the centre slightly less frequent diesel electric services ripe for the introduction of the third rail, and in the west, services more typical of today's British Rail.

To a person who only travels infrequently by rail it was interesting to look at the services provided. Encouragingly punctuality was good with the bulk of arrivals "on time" or at worst two minutes late. The worst examples of lateness were on the main line west of Salisbury which suffered delays due to the Western Region's misguided singling of the line, and on Sunday around Ford due to permanent way works. The latter resulted in the 18.03 from Portsmouth Harbour to Victoria via Arundel being diverted via Hove, which was held at Barnham 19 minutes waiting for a guard to appear.

The realities of modern public transport particularly show around Yeovil, where Yeovil Junction station is 1½ miles from Yeovil and no bus connection, the railway to Yeovil Town being closed years ago. An interesting comparison

is the closure of all stations, bar two, between Yeovil and Salisbury, but every station and halt, albeit mainly unstaffed, open between Yeovil Penn Mill and Weymouth. The Southern Electric is, of course, unchanging, for example between Havant and Chichester, a distance of 9 miles, there are four stations and four halts, all staffed in the day!.

Another example of the Southern dedication to service is its continuing provision of through trains. The "push pull" arrangement to allow through trains between Waterloo and Weymouth is well known. Less well known is where trains split to two destinations, for example at Barnham where on trains from London the front 4-CIG units goes onto Portsmouth Harbour and the rear 4-BIG goes onto Bognor Regis. The Southern even hits its own equivalent of the Chesham shuttle, the Lymington branch. This is a 5½ mile long single track electrified line from Brokenhurst with an hourly service, Sundays included, provided by one of those maids of all work, a 4-VEP unit.

One thing particularly noticeable was the total absence of freight traffic except bulk stone, oil and container trains. Whilst this is BR policy one cannot help wondering why wagon load traffic can be profitable in Europe but not in Great Britain. It is encouraging to see containers of Ford spares at Southampton on rail wagons, although on reflection less so when one notes that they are imports from Ford's Belgian plant and not exports. Equally train loads of aviation fuel from Fawley to Gatwick were notable. However, to the country it seems incredible that recent adverts for a new industrial estate in the triangle of lines near Cosham state that its major advantage is that it is within half a mile of the M27 despite the expense of building a bridge over the railway, no mention of the advantage of rail connections.

Two final possibly controversial points. Firstly as usual a number of trains booked for buffet cars had no buffet. This is quite common these days and perhaps this is an area where contractors could be brought in. After all the London & South Western restaurant cars were operated by Spiers and Pond and the London Brighton & South Coast catering was by the Pullman Car Company so this would not be anything new. The second point is the number of crew buses that BR seem to have. At one work site there were ten parked by the line and in total there must be many hundreds. Apart from the obvious thought that these people should travel by rail, surely a great reduction in these vehicles would help to reduce costs.

To give some idea of the value of these tickets it was possible to cover 1,149½ miles in seven days, very leisurely without pushing hard, very good value for £9, i.e. a fraction over 3/4p a mile!! Certainly a very good insight into railway working, the Southern Electric image of frequent, clean, punctual and connecting services still reigns and could show other regions a few things. However, please can the buffet cars be manned?

#### WHAT IS THIS THAT ROARETH THUS? DIESEL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOMERSET - Mike Walker

For those of us who do not believe that the best diesels are built at Derby, Doncaster, Crew or Swindon, the locomotive event of 1981 was the delivery of a new industrial shunter to a Somerset quarry.

For sometime Foster Yeoman have been using ex BR 08's to shunt trains at their Merehead quarry, but increasingly loads have called for something larger, a General Motors model SW 1001 switcher. As only brief reference has been made to this loco by the railway press, a closer look may be of interest.

The unit is the standard US model and was built at the Electromotive Division plant at La Grange, Chicago and shipped from Baltimore to Southampton on board the "Atlantic Cognac". It moved by road to Merehead as it is well outside BR's loading gauge being nearly 10' wide and 13' high. Of the Bo-Bo arrangement it is 44'8" long, truck (bogie) centres are 22' and it weighs 104 tonnes.

The long hood, or bonnet has a front mounted radiator, with thermostatically controlled shutters, and contains the engine and generator. The engine is EMD's own model 645E, two stroke direct injection diesel in its V8 form. The cylinders are arranged in a 45 degree vee and have a 9 1/16" bore and 10" stroke giving a displacement of 645 cu.ins., hence the model code. The total capacity is therefore 84.56 litres, whilst the compression ratio is 16:1. At 900 rpm the engine develops 1000 hp and sounds not unlike a Deltic.

Unlike EMD's road locomotives, which now have alternators, solid state rectifiers and dc traction motors, the switchers retain the simpler all dc transmission. Therefore the engine is coupled to a dc generator, also of EMD manufacture as are all the axle hung traction motors.

A feature of modern US locos is the centralised air system. A single air intake with inertial filters supplies the engine intake, traction motor and electrical equipment blowers. In addition the whole hood structure is moderately pressurised and sealed to keep exterior dust and grime out.

The cab is EMD's low profile style mounted at the rear. The internal layout features the standard control console, although the air conditioning option has not been taken. Entry is from a rear platform over the battery box. The driver (or engineer?) sits on the right.

The loco rides on the AAR type A truck which has a wheelbase of 8' and wheel diameter of 3'4". The truck is of the double drop equaliser type and has Timken needle roller bearings. The trucks are separated by the fuel tank and air reservoirs.

Externally the unit retains standard US head and classification lights, chime horn and warning bell, even the brackets for the US couplers are still there. Of course, British side buffers and screw couplings are fitted. The loco has both vacuum and dual air brakes.

This is the first full size US diesel to work in this country and Foster Yeoman are to be congratulated on their enterprise. What does the average BR driver make of it? Long may the hills echo to the scream of the EMD 645 engines.